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REMARKS**INTRODUCTION**

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 2-4, 9, and 12-22 been amended. No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry are respectfully requested.

Claims 2-4 and 6-22 are pending and under consideration. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102

In the Office Action at pages 3-6, numbered items 7-13, claims 2-4, 6, and 9-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,493,692 to Theimer, et al. This rejection is traversed and reconsideration is requested.

Independent claim 2 is directed to an access request processing method for use in a communication device providing inter-user communication. Independent claim 2 has been amended to recite "storing the attribute-assigning policy" and, when a request for communication occurs, "determining an attribute of a requester based on stored user information or the attribute-assigning policy. Support for the amendments to independent claim 2 can be found in the originally filed Specification, at least in Fig. 3 and at page 29, line 20 to page 30, line 9, and in Fig. 7 and at page 39, line 5 to page 42, line 8. Independent claims 3, 4, 9, and 12-22 have been amended to recite similar features.

Applicants respectfully submit that Theimer, et al. is directed to the selective delivery of electronic messages to a user in a multiple computer system based on the context and environment of the user. The present invention, in contrast, teaches "a processing policy in which processes for communication requests are set for each of the users, the processes each in turn being according to a first user from whom there is a request for communication with a second user, to status of the second user with whom communication is requested, and to content of the requested communication, the processing policy including an attribute-assigning policy setting a relationship between the first user requesting communication and the second user," "storing the attribute-assigning policy," and "when a request for communication occurs, looking up the attribute-assigning policy and information of the first user and the second user, determining and reporting to the communication device a process for the request based, in the policy, on the second user with whom communication is requested, and determining an attribute of a requester based on stored user information or the attribute-assigning policy." Thus,

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according to the present invention, a request is controlled by a user based on the status of the user and based on an attribute of the requester.

As Theimer, et al. fails to teach or suggest at least "looking up the attribute-assigning policy and information of the first user and the second user, determining and reporting to the communication device a process for the request based, in the policy, on the second user with whom communication is requested, and determining an attribute of a requester based on stored user information or the attribute-assigning policy" when a request for communication occurs, as recited in amended independent claim 2, Applicants respectfully submit that amended independent claim 2 patentably distinguishes over the prior art and is in condition for allowance.

As amended independent claims 3, 4, 9, and 12-22 have been amended to recite features similar to those of amended independent claim 2, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 3, 4, 9, and 12-22 patentably distinguish over the prior art for reasons similar to amended independent claim 2. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that amended independent claims 3, 4, 9, and 12-22, and those claims depending directly or indirectly therefrom, patentably distinguish over the prior art and are in condition for allowance.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103

In the Office Action at pages 7-8, numbered items 16 and 17, claims 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Theimer in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,943,478 to Aggarwal. The reasons for the rejection are set forth in the Office Action and therefore not repeated. The rejection is traversed and reconsideration is requested.

Applicants respectfully submit that Aggarwal fails to cure the deficiencies of Theimer, noted above, with respect to independent claim 4, from which claims 7 and 8 depend. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that Theimer and Aggarwal, taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest all of the features of dependent claims 7 and 8. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 7 and 8 patentably distinguish over the prior art for at least the reasons set forth above and, therefore, are in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all outstanding objections and rejections have been overcome and/or rendered moot. And further, that all pending claims patentably distinguish over the prior art. Thus, there being no further outstanding objections or rejections, the application is submitted as being in condition for

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allowance which action is earnestly solicited.

If the Examiner has any remaining issues to be addressed, it is believed that prosecution can be expedited by the Examiner contacting the undersigned attorney for a telephone interview to discuss resolution of such issues.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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